

May 27, 2020 (20-085)

Contact: Joint Information Center
253-512-7100
wajic@mil.wa.gov

Three new counties approved to move to Phase 2 of Gov. Jay Inslee's Safe Start plan

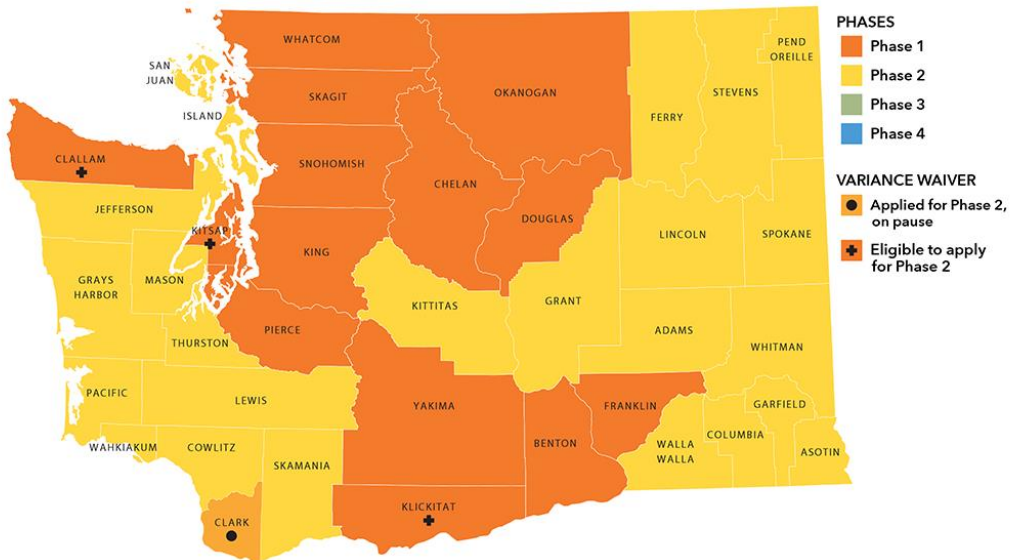
CAMP MURRAY, WA –Today Washington State Secretary of Health John Wiesman approved variance applications for Kittitas, Thurston, and Walla Walla counties to move into Phase 2 of Gov. Jay Inslee's [Safe Start plan](#).

Kittitas County was previously on pause due to an outbreak investigation. Over the past three weeks, the Kittitas County Public Health Department demonstrated their ability to quickly and thoughtfully respond to an outbreak in their community. The Washington State Department of Health continues to have confidence in their approach, and as a result, has approved their variance application to move to Phase 2 of Gov. Jay Inslee's Safe Start plan.

A total of 24 counties have now been approved to move to Phase 2: Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Cowlitz, Ferry, Garfield, Grant, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, Kittitas, Lewis, Lincoln, Mason, Pacific, Pend Orielle, San Juan, Skamania, Spokane, Stevens, Thurston, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla, and Whitman.

Clallam, Kitsap, and Klickitat counties are eligible to apply for a variance to move to Phase 2. The application from Clark County remains on pause due to an outbreak investigation.

Safe Start Washington: County Status



Businesses approved to move into Phase 2 must comply with all health and safety requirements outlined in the [guidance to reopen](#).

To apply for a variance, counties must have an average of less than 10 new cases per 100,000 residents over a 14-day period. The application process requires support from the local health officer, the local board of health, local hospitals, and the county commission/council.

Each county must demonstrate they have adequate local hospital bed capacity as well as adequate PPE supplies to keep health care workers safe. The application must include plans for:

- Making testing available and accessible to everyone in the county with symptoms.
- Staffing case investigations and contact tracing.
- Housing people in isolation or quarantine who can't or don't want to do so at home.
- Providing case management services to those in isolation and quarantine.
- Responding rapidly to outbreaks in congregate settings.

The variance requests are reviewed by the secretary of health, who can approve the plans as submitted, approve with modifications or deny the application. If circumstances change within the jurisdiction, the variance can be revoked.

Learn more about county variances and the statewide response to COVID-19 at coronavirus.wa.gov.

Individuals can also find COVID-19 information on the [Department of Health's website](#) or call 1-800-525-0127. Individuals can text the word "coronavirus" to 211-211 to receive information and updates on their phone wherever they are.

#